



# Special Education Program

# Special Education

- What Is Special Education?

Special education is a broad term used to by the law to describe specially designed instruction that meets the unique needs of a student that has a disability. These services are free and provided by the public school system.

- What is the goal of Special Education?

Special education makes it possible for students to achieve academic success in the least restrictive environment despite their disability. The federal law governing the system is called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA. IDEA entitles all children with learning disabilities to a free appropriate education (FAPE). Examples of "appropriate" programs include:

- A specific program or class
- Access to specialists.
- Modifications in the educational program such as curriculum and teaching methods

# How does a student qualify for Special Education?

- When a student is struggling in school, having social or behavioral problems they are referred to the **Student Support Team (SST.)**
- The **Student Support Team** is a group formed within the school to further examine a student's academic, behavioral and social-emotional progress. The SST team can propose interventions for the student. The team usually consists of a teacher, administrator, parents, and support personnel from the school. The student Support Team follows the **Response to Intervention Model.**

# What is Response to Intervention (RTI)

- Part of the Student Support Team process (SST)
- A multi-tier approach to identify & support students experiencing difficulty.
- Functions as a part of a data-based process of identify learning disabilities.
- Begins with the universal screening of all children in general education classes.
- Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to improve a student's rate of learning.
- If the student support team determines that research based interventions are not working , a student may be referred for further testing.

# Special Education Eligibility

- Students that are not responding to interventions through RTI may be referred for further testing.
- In order for the IEP team to qualify a child for special education services, they must be found eligible in one or more of the 13 categories of special education and it must *adversely affect their educational performance.*
- **The 13 categories of disabilities are:**
  - Autism Spectrum Disorder (AUT)
  - Deaf-Blind (D/B)
  - Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH)
  - Emotional/Behavioral Disorder (EBD),
  - Mild, Moderate, Severe, or Profound Intellectual Disability (MIID, MOID, SID, or PID)
  - Orthopedic Impairment (OI)
  - Other Health Impairment (OHI)
  - Significant Developmental Delay (SDD)
  - Specific Learning Disability (SLD)
  - Speech-Language Impairment (SI)
  - Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
  - Visual Impairment, including Blindness (VI)

# What is an IEP?

- Simply put, an IEP is a written plan that will describe the program(s) and special services a student requires to be successful. It is a plan that ensures that proper programming is in place to help the student with special needs to be successful at school. School staff and parents as well as medical staff if appropriate develop the IEP collaboratively.

# What is a 504 Plan?

- A 504 plan is for students with disabilities but are working at grade level.
- This includes students with a normal ability to learn academically, but who have a diagnosed disability or medical condition. A 504 plan allows students to receive accommodations without academic support.

# APS and ANCS Partnership

APS has the role of the LEA (Local Education Agency.) They support ANCS with any compliance, legal issues, and wrap around services. ANCS must submit monthly reports to APS in regards to compliance and enrollment.

## Special Education

### Chain of Command with APS

Ashley States

Special Education  
Program Coordinator  
at ANCS. Reports to  
Matt Underwood

Thomas McGaha

Special Education  
Program Coordinator  
at APS and is the  
direct liaison to  
the charter schools.

John O'Connor

Asst. Superintendent  
of Student Services  
for APS.

Lee Rideout

Assistant General  
Counsel for Atlanta  
Public Schools.

# How does ANCS and APS work together to support students with disabilities?

APS provides “wrap around services” to ANCS.

These services include:

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Support
- Vision Specialists
- Behavior Specialist
- Audiology Services.

# Continuum of Services

- The goal of the special education department at ANCS is to serve every child with special needs that enrolls at either campus. If it is determined that a student's needs cannot be met at within our school setting the continuum of services will be offered within other schools at APS.

- **The DOE Special Education Rules Implementation Manual states that:**

*“Charter schools must make available the services needed to provide education for students with IEPs. The charter that is part of a district has, as part of its resources, the full continuum of services and supports within the district. At times, a student’s IEP may determine that a specific setting is needed that may not be available at the charter, but that is available at another school within the district. The charter that is part of the district may not, however, decline to serve students with IEPs.”*

# Program Improvements

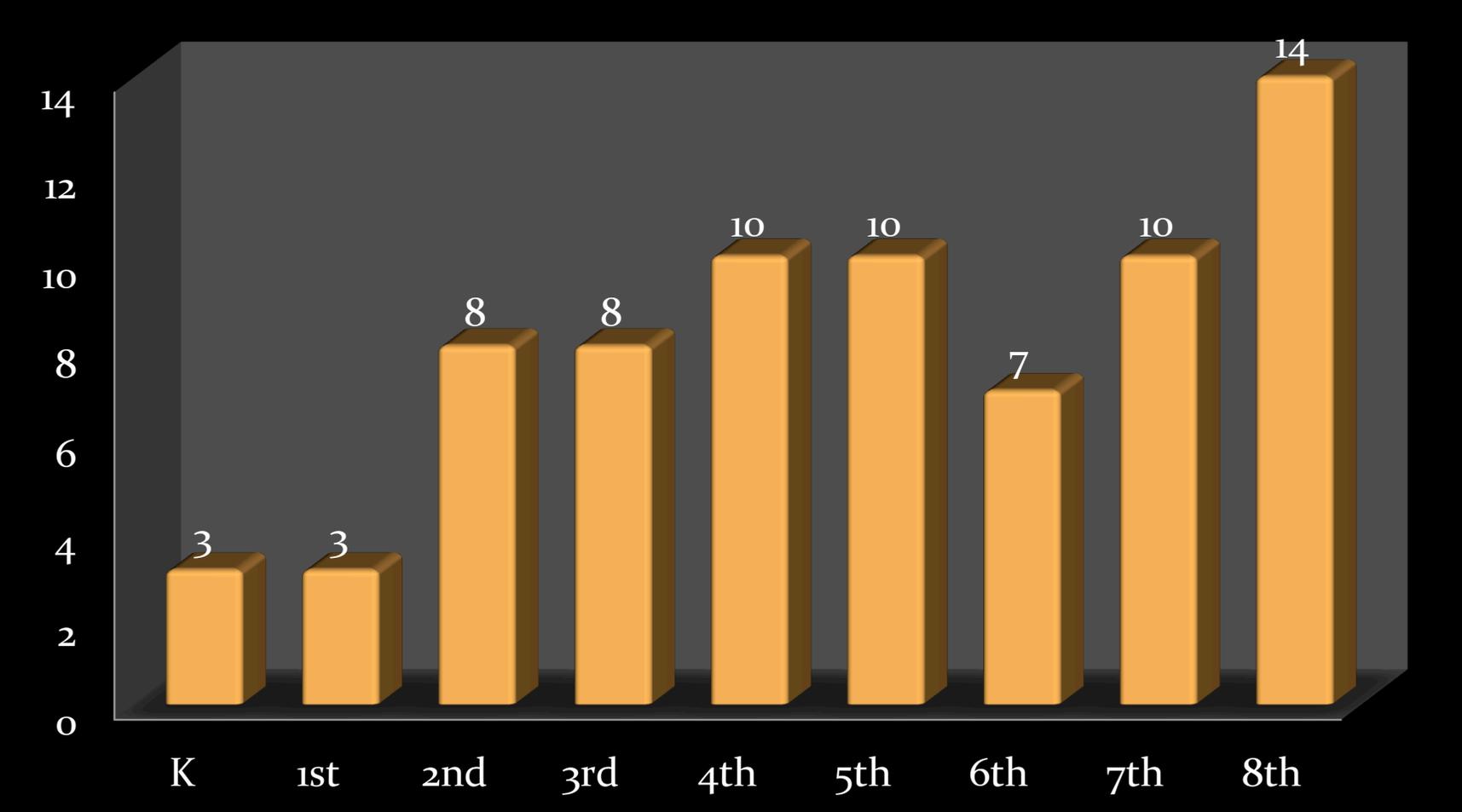
**The increase in staff this year has improve the program in many ways:**

- We have reduced the teacher student ratios significantly in compliance with special education requirements.
- We have implemented a full inclusion program at both campuses.
- We have hired an extra teacher at the elementary campus that runs an intense and specialized reading program to help struggling readers.
- The increase in staff has improved the intensity, strength, and flexibility of the program.
- We have improved our assistive technology library for students.

# Special Education Stats at ANCS

- Presently we have a program coordinator, 5 lead teachers and 2 associate teachers in the special education department.
- The Department currently serves 73 students K-8 .
- There is an expected growth of 6-8 students this year as our enrollment has increased.
- We provide academic, social, behavioral, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and audiology, and medical support.

# Special Education Students by Grade Level



# The Elementary Campus: 412 Students

## Last Year

- 2 lead and 1 associate teacher
- 43 students, 1:18 teacher student ratio
- Each teacher provided instruction for 6 grade levels
- One teacher taught math for 6 grade levels one taught ELA for 6 grade levels.
- Students were pulled from their regular education classrooms for services.

## This Year

- 3 leads and 1 associate teacher
- 42 students (currently), 1:12 teacher student ratio
- Teachers work with fewer grade levels (K-2, 3-5)
- One teacher to run a dedicated intensive Orton Gillingham program in a small group setting
- The majority of students are receiving support services within the classroom through inclusion services.

# The Middle Campus: 234 Students

## Last Year

- 1 Lead & 1 Associate Teacher
- 32 Students with a 1:24 teacher to student ratio.
- One teacher to cover three grade levels.
- Average small group size is 9-10 & was multiple grade levels.

## This Year

- 2 Leads & 1 Associate Teacher
- 31 students (currently) with a 1:13 ratio (growth expected).
- Each teacher covers two grade levels.
- Full inclusion program where the majority of students receive support within the regular education classroom so they do not miss instruction by being pulled out of class.